

CHAPTER 1

1 PURPOSE, RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND STRUCTURE

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1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to introduce the subject of the research to the reader. For any research to be meaningful, it has to serve a purpose and for that reason the first part of this chapter deals with the purpose of the study. It gives the background against which the research takes place and justifies the research based upon an identified problem. The problem thus defined then guides the research and unless an answer is obtained for, or, at least, proposed to address this problem, the research cannot be said to be successful.

It is then explored in the chapter what the objectives of the study are. These become the parameters within which the study takes place. The objectives define what is going to be researched and what is being excluded. Once the objectives have been defined, the contribution of the study is explored.

Any researcher does his research from a certain viewpoint and especially in the ambit of the social sciences, such viewpoints can be from various schools of thought. The philosophical points of departure for this particular study are described in this chapter.

Lastly, this chapter describes the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Purpose of research

1.2.1 Background

Water, land, minerals, etc. are the oldest resources and have been utilised by early man in its natural form. First, man lived off the land, using what was freely available. He soon, however, invented artifacts and started to produce goods, slowly evolving from an agriculturally-based society to an industrially-based society, in the process realising a need for financial resources to facilitate the marketplace. This utilisation of financial resources in the production

process eventually led to the birth of a discipline called "Financial Management", that is, the management of the firm's financial resources.

Whereas previously, human resources were seen as a means to an end only, more emphasis was being placed in the 20th century on man himself. Man emerged as one of the most important resources utilised in the production process. This led to the discipline called "Human Resources Management", that is, the management of the firm's human resources (Horton, 1979: ix).

Today we have complete disciplines for the management of natural, physical, material, financial and human resources. For each of these disciplines there is a set of rules, principles, doctrines, standards and practices. "Each of these has a body of knowledge surrounding it and a set of principles devoted to its management" (Ross, 1970: 11). The shelves of libraries are full of literature on these disciplines and, by far, most of these sources of literature agree with each other on the subjects. Nobody questions the validity of the management of financial and human resources any more and by now everyone accepts that they are resources to be managed according to well-established theories and practices.

Relatively recently information became of major importance to the individual in his daily life as well as to business. Information is necessary for just staying in business - a ticket to the game, so to speak - but also to gain a competitive edge over the competition. Man has evolved from the early agricultural age, through an industrial age into an "information age". Information emerged as the newly discovered resource. Sunter (1987: 39), having taken part in an exercise for the Anglo American Mining House to set different scenarios for the year 2000 and beyond, writes the following: "The future war in the world, in terms of trade, will be fought more on knowledge and less on raw materials". He finds the proof in the world situation where (at that time) the US and the USSR were locked in star wars programs while Japan has passed both of them in terms of per-capita income and yet spending virtually nothing on weapons. The success of Japan can, *inter alia*, be contributed to its

economic success which is based on effective decision making by leaders. Without information, decision making becomes guesswork.

Information is not only important to commerce and industry, but also to the individual. As Norman Wiener puts it: "To live effectively is to live with adequate information" (Hussain and Hussain 1984: 589). Man, as will be shown later on, needs information as one of his most basic needs.

It is best summarised in the report (in Horton, 1979: 64) by the US "National Commission on Libraries and Information Science": "Information, whether in the raw form of empirical data, or in a highly processed form we call 'knowledge', has become to be regarded as a national resource as critical to the Nation's well-being and security as any other natural resource, such as water or coal".

Despite the growing importance attached to information over the last few years, even to the point where it has become popular to talk and write about "information management", no uniformly accepted discipline is available for such management. Worse, there is not even general agreement on the question of what information is. This stands in sharp contrast to the management of the other resources which, as was pointed out, all have well-established theories and practices.

It is easy to say and write that information should be managed as a resource and that information as a resource must be put on par with the other resources: Human resources and financial resources. It is far more difficult to define what is meant by it and to put it into practice.

1.2.2 Problem definition

The information age is facilitated by the use of computer technology. Naisbitt (1984:28) remarks: "Computer technology is to the information age what mechanization was to the industrial revolution". Yet, despite all the billions

of computer printouts being produced each day, the information needs of the decision makers are not always fulfilled. "What is needed ...is not more paper or raw data, but distilled, summarized information that can be accessed, assimilated, and used more effectively, particularly by managers" (Synott and Gruber, 1981: 3).

The problem is not that information is not available, but that it is available in the wrong form, is made available at the wrong time or that it is not accessible and digestible to the user. It seems as if it is hidden away somewhere. Technology, and more specifically, computer technology, helps in handling the huge masses of information, but technology "...*per se* is not the answer: technology alone ...is 'dead metal'" (Cronin, 1985: 7). Information technology alone is therefore definitely not the answer to the information glut, on the contrary, through its vast capabilities and capacities, it is adding to the glut. "We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge", writes Naisbitt (1984: 24).

The solution proposed by many is to manage information as a true resource of the organisation. "The time has come for managers to reassert control over their information and their organisation" (Tricker, 1982: 1). Diebold (1979: 41) puts it even stronger: "The organisations that will excel in the 1980's will be those that manage information as a major resource". Embedded in these statements are two factors: Firstly, that information *is* a resource and, secondly, that it *can* be managed.

The emphasis, therefore, does not so much lie on the collection or the production of information as it does on its management. A statement like "information must be managed" may appear unnecessary because of its obviousness and because it seems like common sense. Bryce (1987: 90), however, warns: "Common sense, it seems, is not very common" and then gives various examples where things that should be done, are in fact not being done despite the fact that it makes "common sense" to do it.

If the solution is so obvious, why is it that information is not managed? Amongst others, the reasons could be one or more of the following:

- The nature and character of information is not understood. There are important differences between data, information and knowledge. These differences and the relationship between them, are apparently not always taken cognisance of.
- Information is not treated as a scarce resource and managed as such, that is, information is a "free good", like air.
- Taking the literature on the subject of information alone, one finds many different and sometimes downright conflicting views on the same aspect of information and its management, as will be shown in the later chapters. Experts, usually representing different schools of thought on the subject, even differ on what information really is. Considering the wide range of disciplines interested in information as a concept, eg. information and library science, computer science, linguistics, philosophy and others, as well as the different schools of thought within these disciplines, these differences are hardly surprising. This must lead to confusion to the manager who is trying to understand the subject or sell the idea to senior management.
- People *want* to manage information, but they simply do not know *how* to manage information. One's intuition convinces one that information is important and that it should be managed, however, when sitting down to actually do it, one finds that one does not know where or how to start. Books and articles on the subject also do not provide straight answers and recipes.

Underlying the proposition that information must be managed as a resource, is the assumption that it is indeed *possible* to manage it. This aspect is not getting much attention. Numerous writers contend that information must be

managed, fewer writers address the question of *how* it should be managed and even fewer address the question of whether it *can* be managed.

The problem that will be addressed in this thesis is the paradoxical phenomenon that information is seemingly available in abundance on the one hand, while the need for information is, on the other hand, not satisfied. The proposition that information must be managed and, more specifically, be managed as a resource, will be evaluated as a solution to the problem.

1.2.3 Objectives of the study and research questions

The first objective is to research critically and evaluate the proposition that information can be classified as a resource. Information and information management mean many things to many people and often, explicitly and implicitly, conflicting views on these subjects are found.

This objective leads to the following research questions:

- In order to evaluate this proposition, it will be necessary, first and foremost, to address the question of what the nature and characteristics of information are. A stand will have to be taken regarding what information is, what data is, what knowledge is and what wisdom is and, very importantly, what the relationship between these concepts is.

In order to add more clarity, the definition of information needs to be enhanced by exploring other related and often confusing terms and disciplines dealing with the subject. What is meant by the terms information resources, information sources, information assets and information systems? Disciplines to be investigated and their viewpoints evaluated would include information and library science, information theory and computer science.

- Secondly, where does information manifest itself in a narrow context? What are the uses of information, what is its value, its cost, its uniqueness, its empowering nature and finally, its role in the decision-making process? In the process of obtaining answers to these questions, it will be important to look closely at the life-cycle of information.
- All of the above will lead to the definition of information and the other related terms. The third research question will be to look at information in a broad framework, that is, the different contexts where information manifests itself. Where does information fit into the world around us? This will be done in terms of information and the individual, information and society, information and the economy, information and business, information in national context and information in global context. This will provide a broad, contextual framework for information.
- Having analysed information in the way described above, the question posed in the first place can be answered: Is information a resource and if found to be true, is it perhaps more than a resource?

The second objective is to research the proposition that information is something which can, in fact, be managed. This objective leads to the following research questions:

- Firstly, what is "information management" and, what is "the management of information"? As will be shown, information management means many things to many people. Librarians, as an example, have something specifically in mind when they talk about information management. A computer scientist may have something completely different in mind when he uses the same term. None of them may be right and yet, all of them may be right, depending, naturally, on their definitions of information management. Clarification of this term is essential as much confusion seems to exist.

- Secondly, can a conceptual framework or model be developed (if it is found not to exist) to show the relationship between information and its related terms (data, knowledge, wisdom) and aspects such as information technology and information systems which obviously must stand in some relationship to each other.
- The third research question to be answered is whether the general principles of management can be applied to information. An answer is necessary to resolve the issue of whether information can in fact be managed. This will be done taking into consideration the special characteristics of information and the conceptual model of what information management is.
- The above three questions will lead to the fourth, crucial question: Can information be managed? As will be shown, information is something elusive and, even though it may be possible to define and describe it accurately, it does not follow automatically that it can be managed.

It is therefore important to realise that the study will focus on the "what", rather than the "why" or the "how" of information management. It is felt, and will be proven in the study, that the "what" has not been sufficiently addressed before by taking into account the viewpoints of the majority of disciplines. Even though it could possibly be argued from within a single discipline that the "what" is well understood *in that discipline*, it becomes an open question once again when the different disciplines are considered together,.

The research will provide guidelines for the "how to (manage information)" issue, but the scope will not be extended to cover it in detail. This will broaden the scope too much. It is acknowledged that the "how to" question is a relevant and important one and that it is a logical extension to the research proposed in this study. It is felt, however, that it warrants a study on its own.

1.2.4 Contribution of the study

Regardless of the fact that we have been living in the so-called information age for years now, we are still having the same problems as before, debating the same issues. One can say that unclarity about many aspects of information and its management exists and even that confusion often reigns.

By satisfying the two objectives, it will be attempted to critically test the statements often made so glibly that information "must be managed as a resource". A fair amount has been written about the subject, but very few of these literature sources deal with the fundamental questions raised above. What is more, the available literature sources often portray conflicting views. This study will attempt to systemise the literature and to synthesise from it.

1.3 Research philosophy and approach

1.3.1 Introduction

Management studies clearly fall in the realm of the social sciences but information has been approached by researchers from both the natural and from the social sciences. Intraña (1992) used a philosophical point of departure in his research on management information systems where he defined information. Shannon and Weaver (1949) on the other hand, approached information from a scientific (mathematical) point of view in their research on messages (information) being transmitted between a source and a receiver.

Clarity on the point of departure is of crucial importance as it influences the entire study.

1.3.2 Information Management: Natural science or social science?

Various disciplines address the concept of information. Firstly, there is the field of information science. This field concerns itself with the study of communication of information in society (Vickery and Vickery, 1987: 1). It is obvious that the point of departure of information science (and the related library science), is from a social point of view.

Computer scientists also address the concept of information. Their definition, as will be shown later on in the thesis, differs from the one used by the information scientist. In fact, computer scientists make little distinction between data and information: To most of them information is but processed data and therefore something very tangible and concrete. To the computer scientist and the information theorist, information can be made to obey all kinds of mathematical laws. The natural sciences connection is obvious.

A field halfway between information science and computer science, is the field of (management) information systems or informatics, as it is sometimes called. Du Plooy, Introna and Roode (1994: 5 *et seq.*) in their research on the nature of information systems draw the conclusion that information systems "are developed by people for people. [It] supports and facilitates human and social processes through technology, while preserving the balance... The [view] that information systems consist of technology supported by humans and human processes, is not valid". They define the field of informatics as "an interdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry, where **information**, information systems and the integration thereof with the organisation is studied in order to benefit the total system (technology, people, **organisation** and society)". According to this definition, the field of information management falls right into the field of informatics. Their approach (strongly supported by other researchers such as Boland (1987) and Lyytinen *et al.* (1992)) to the information concept is strongly social.

The management discipline can only be social in nature. Management is done by people. Even if resources other than humans are managed, it is still done by people. It is therefore clear that information management is a social sciences matter and any research approaching it solely from a different point of departure should be seriously questioned.

The fact that information management will be studied from a social angle even though elements of the concept have their roots deeply embedded in the natural sciences, must not distract from the relevance of such research. Boland (1987: 371) uses the terms "scientism" to describe the phenomenon whereby the methods and techniques normally used by the natural sciences are perceived to be the only valid research methods. He goes to great length to show how certain concepts are being described in natural sciences terms just so that the natural scientific methods can be applied. An example of this is the view that information is simply structured data (the computer scientists' view). By taking meaning out of the definition of information, it can be dealt with from a natural sciences viewpoint and the scientific methods of the natural sciences can be applied. However, this reduces and limits the information concept so severely that it becomes unacceptable to the researcher.

Scientism has no place in the study of information and even less of information management. The human element is too strongly present in the concepts of information and management in order to make it a natural sciences only issue.

1.3.3 Social research

The social sciences, other than the natural sciences, are not exact sciences. There are very few, if any, hard and fast "rules" or "laws" as one typically finds in the natural sciences. The social sciences deal mostly with people issues and the behaviour of people, as we all know, is not always predictable. Man has the ability to think and to make choices for himself. This is an area which the social sciences address and unless an ideal situation is being studied, it can never be as exact as the natural sciences. Any issue can be approached

from various philosophical angles. Being philosophical in nature (and subjective most of the time), the arguments cannot be proven unqualified, neither can they be disproved without qualification. It is therefore important to clearly spell out the points of departure upon which this thesis is based.

1.3.3.1 A taxonomic framework

The work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) provides us with a taxonomic framework for research in the social sciences. They contend that social theorists operate from one of four mutually exclusive paradigms. They firstly distinguish between subjectivity and objectivity with regards to the social world, as in table 1.1.

Table 1.1
The Subjective - Objective Dimension

| The subjective approach to social science | | The objective approach to social science | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Approach | Explanation | Approach | Explanation |
| Nominalist | Assumes that the social world external to individual cognition is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels which are used to structure reality. The nominalist does not admit to there being any real structure to the world which these concepts are used to describe. The names used are regarded as artificial creations whose utility is based upon their convenience as tools for describing, making sense of and negotiating the external world. | Realist | Believes that the social world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable structures. For the realist the social world exists independently of an individual's appreciation of it and it is not something the individual creates. |
| Anti-positivist | Is firmly set against the utility of searching for laws or underlying regularities in the world of social affairs. One can understand by occupying the frame of reference of the participant in action. One has to understand from the inside rather than from the outside. | Positivist | Seeks to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between constituent elements and is in essence based upon the traditional approaches applied in the natural sciences. |
| Voluntarist | Regards man as completely autonomous and free-willed. | Determinist | Regards man and his activities as being completely determined by the situation or environment in which he is located. |
| Ideographic | Assumes that one can only understand the social world by obtaining first hand knowledge of the subject under investigation. Emphasises the analysis of the subjective accounts which are generated by getting inside situations and involving oneself in the everyday flow of life. | Nomothetic | Methodology emphasises systematic protocol and technique. Prescribed technique centers on the scientific testing of hypotheses, the construction of scientific tests and the use of quantitative techniques for the analysis of data. |

Source: Burrell and Morgan (1979:1-7), as adapted by Tromp, 1993

Secondly, Burrell and Morgan distinguish between what they call regulation and radical change. The regulation theorists' point of departure is the underlying unity and cohesiveness of society whilst the radicalists' concern is to find explanations for deep-seated structural conflict and contradictions which characterise society. They summarise these two opposing views as in table 1.2.

Table 1.2
The Regulation - Radical Change Dimension

| Sociology of Regulation is concerned with: | Sociology of Radical Change is concerned with: |
|--|--|
| The <i>status quo</i> | Radical change |
| Social order | Structural conflict |
| Consensus | Modes of domination |
| Social integration and cohesion | Contradiction |
| Solidarity | Emancipation |
| Need satisfaction | Deprivation |
| Actuality | Potentiality |

Source: Burrell and Morgan (1979:18) as adapted by Du Plooy, Inrona and Roode (1994: 9 - 10)

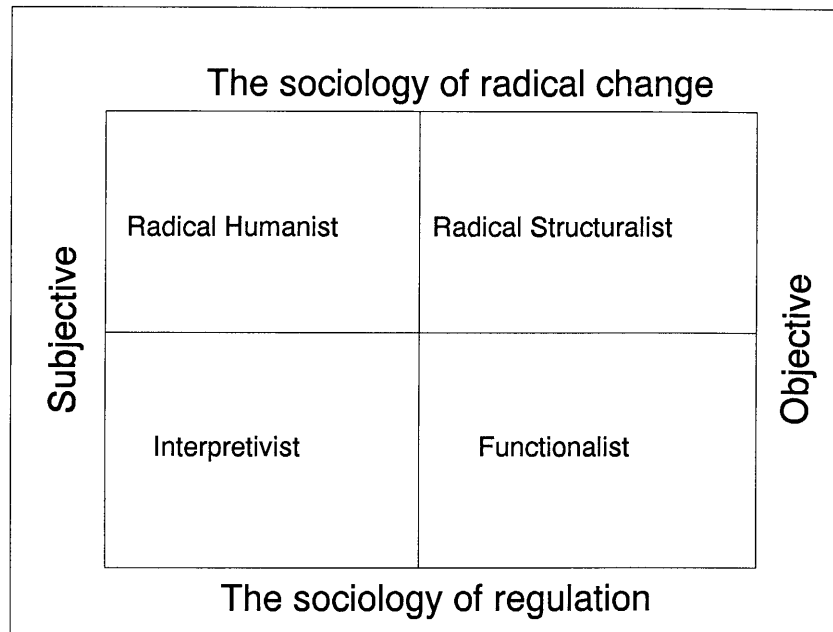
With subjectivity/objectivity as the one dimension and regulation/radical change as the other, Burrell and Morgan propose a taxonomical framework as in figure 1.1. Each one of the four paradigms represents an alternative view of society. These paradigms are mutually exclusive.

It is clear that the study of information management must fall within the subjective realm: It addresses the world of the "softer issues" of humans. Information management is something that humans do, or should do. It can never be the exact world of the natural scientist. Human behaviour is far less predictable than the behaviour of a free falling object under the "laws" of gravity, or a nucleus being bombarded by electrons.

To determine the second realm in the taxonomy in which information management falls, is more difficult. Is society today one where the status quo prevails, where decisions are based upon consensus and where there is solidarity, or is it where radical changes are taking place and where conflict and contradiction is the order of the day?

The standpoint of the interpretivist is that "the world of human affairs is cohesive, ordered and integrated" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 31). It can

Figure 1.1
Four paradigms for the analysis of social change



Source: Burrell and Morgan (1979: 22)

indeed be said that there is strong evidence of such a world: Democracy is being accepted worldwide as the norm for leadership on a national level; participative and collaborative management replaced autocratic management; workers are recognised by management as a force to be taken into consideration, workers who are at the same time shareholders and where minority views are being listened to.

The other side of the coin, the radical side, is also evident: The entire world is undergoing major change. In many cases these changes did not take place in an evolutionary way but in a radical way. Cases in point are the dismantling of the Soviet Republics and, more closer to home, the dismantling of apartheid. Although there is a genuine attempt at reaching consensus with regards to decision making both on a political and corporate level, it goes hand in hand with conflict. Again the South African political scene is a case in point. It goes further than politics only: Nothing is apparently taken as sacred any more. The status quo, the "establishment", religion and authority are all being

questioned, people are not willing any longer to succumb to censorship, the press must be free and all must have a freedom to sexual preferences.

Regarding business, a premium is placed upon creative and innovative ideas. Peters (1992: 143) writes the following about McKinsey, a company having offices in 25 countries: "...there's no traditional hierarchy. There are no organizational charts. No job descriptions. No policy manuals. No rules about managing client engagements... And yet all these things are well understood - make no mistake. McKinsey is not out of control!" MicroSoft approached the market totally different from, then enormously powerful and successful, IBM and managed to take away the lead from IBM in more than one way. Toyota used an entirely different way to design, develop and market its Lexus than was the case at the successful General Motors and Ford. It caused a paradigm shift in the motor car industry. By being totally different, the stockbroker Milken "rattled the entire structure of smokestack power in America" by introducing junk-bonds (Toffler, 1990: 51). Being different - radically different - is the name of the corporate game.

Cohen (in Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 16) tried to reconcile the two paradigms by claiming that they were not really opposites but rather mirror-images of the same thing and therefore not mutually exclusive. Burrell and Morgan differ from this viewpoint by pointing out that such a viewpoint "ignores the fundamental differences which exist between [the two paradigms]" (1979: 16). One therefore has to take a stand - there is no middle-road.

Even though there are signs in society which point to the interpretative paradigm, there are overwhelmingly more which point to the radical humanistic paradigm. Life today, be it political, corporate or personal life, means change, conflict and contradiction. This study will therefore be approached from the radical humanistic paradigm (see figure 1.1) as the paradigm best suited to describe society today.

1.3.4 The research approach followed

Du Plooy *et al.* (1994) propose a meta framework for research in the information systems arena. It is based upon the following four questions:

- What is?
- How does?
- Why is?
- How should?

The first question, "what is?", usually is first addressed in the development of a study field and is directed at the "fundamental nature or essence" of the research problem (Du Plooy *et al.*, 1994: 14). It aims to dismantle the issue to its fundamentals to describe it precisely and unambiguously.

The "how does?" question addresses the way in which the problem or phenomenon manifests itself in reality while the "why is?" question tries to explain the real-life behaviour of the problem.

The "how should" question addresses the conclusions reached in the research and may open new areas for further research.

Although the concept of information management can be found in the literature since around 1979, it is still used to describe dissimilar phenomena. The term is being used by librarians, computer scientists and by communication scientists. Yet it goes back to the early philosophers who argued about knowledge (epistemology). It is more than often used synonymously with management information by laymen and academia alike. Therefore, the "what is [information]?" question must be explored to its fullest extent.

To a certain extent, various attempts have been made to describe and define "what [information] is". The outcome has not been consistent, mainly because

of the different points of departure. This study will take all these points into consideration and argue from a puristic, fundamental viewpoint.

The concept of the management of information as a resource is a relatively young concept. It only emerged in the 1970's and businesses and governments are still not exactly sure what to make of it. Academia still have to come forward with a "recipe" for information management based on solid theory. A research methodology based on empirical results (the proving of relationships) appears futile. Information management is presumably done in a haphazard and *ad hoc* way, if it is done at all. A positivistic, empirical methodology is therefore seen as inappropriate for this thesis as it will only prove what is generally known and accepted.

Deductive reasoning, where outcomes are postulated, also seems infeasible as little exists in terms of generalised explanations.

The only research methodology which seems feasible is inductive reasoning where the literature is studied and systemised and then integrated with the researcher's own experience so as to expand existing knowledge. This implies that the research will be qualitative rather than quantitative and, hence, a move away from a pure positivistic approach. Smith (1990: 124) points out that such an attempt has some inherent risks built in as the researcher leaves the well accepted framework of positivism where data integrity is high, but currency is low and enters the qualitative realm where currency is high and data integrity low. Currency in this sense pertains to the ability to generalise results whereas data integrity is the ability to test results through statistical and other methods.

No single research method provides both currency and data integrity at the same time. High data integrity (quantitative) methods are not particularly applicable to theory-building and exploratory research whereas qualitative methods lend themselves to this kind of research (Smith, 1990: 125 *et seq.*). The research methodology in this study will therefore lack data integrity, but this will be compensated for by being high in currency.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 is devoted to the background to the study; the purpose, problem statement and research philosophy and design.

In chapter 2 the nature of information is analysed. It starts with various definitions of data, information, knowledge and wisdom. Despite the many connotations attached to these familiar terms, an attempt is made to systemise and synthesise from the existing definitions a definition for each one which clearly distinguishes the one from the others. The relationships between them are also established. Once information has been defined, a closer look is taken at the origins of information, its life-cycle and the two main dimensions, namely information as a resource and information as a process.

Information has very specific characteristics, for instance, the same "piece" of information can be owned by more than one person at the same time. Another characteristic is the dependence on time and situation. It is shown that these characteristics make information a resource different from other resources in many respects. It is also shown that measuring the quality and quantity of information is evasive, as is determining value and cost of information.

Lastly, the disciplines dealing with information are investigated. Information and library science, information theory and computer science are all scientific fields dealing directly with information.

In chapter 3 information is explored further by analysing its sphere of influence. It is therefore put in a contextual framework. Firstly, there is the human being, or being human, context. It is shown that information plays an integral part of human life. It is then shown that information has a strong influence on society with the possibility of effecting a change to culture. The information society concept is explored in detail. Even the economy is not unchanged by information becoming more important to the point where the economy becomes dominated by information. The information economy is

therefore explored. These contexts are expanded and information's role is analysed in terms of business, on national level and on global level.

Chapter 4 looks at the concept of information management and other related terms. The principles, objectives and benefits are explored leading to a definition. A model is developed for information management, based on the literature and the experience of the researcher. The model provides a conceptual framework for information management.

In chapter 5 the theory and model proposed in chapter 4 are evaluated with respect to what management is. The command-and-control model of management (planning, organising, leading and controlling) is used against which to test the theory. If the principles can be applied, it can be said that information management can be achieved.

Chapter 6 contains the summary, conclusion and suggestions for further research.

1.5 Conclusion

Information has established itself firmly in the 20th century. Having evolved from an agrarian to an industrial and then to a post-industrial society, information became pivotal in supporting society, the economy and even governments. To those who have accepted that information has become a major resource, the notion of having to manage it as such, is mostly taken for granted.

Accepting that information must be managed is one thing, describing what it is and doing it is something different. Some attempt it by focusing on information technology, other on data modelling, others look at information scientists and information theorists for answers. In the mean time, managers eagerly looking for information, find that they are drowning in data, despite or perhaps, because of, spending millions on information technology. The

question, therefore, is: What do we mean by managing information and can it be done? Is there a difference between information management and the management of information? These are the questions that will be focused upon in this study.

The subject of information management will be approached from a social angle. Information itself has deep and strong social roots and so does management. The approach will be subjective; non-positivistic, non-nomothetic and non-deterministic. Personal, social, corporate and political life is perceived to be more radical than interpretative and this will be taken as another point of departure.

The study is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1 is the first the purpose and methodology;

Chapter 2 is an exploration of the nature of information;

Chapter 3 puts information in context;

Chapter 4 defines and explores the information management concept;

Chapter 5 tests information management against the general management principles and

Chapter 6 contains the conclusions, implications and suggestions for further research.
